

# WORKERS WORLD

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# Resistance to Honduran coup regime deepens

By Heather Cottin

August was a month of fierce struggle in Honduras. The National Popular Resistance Front (FNRP) has engaged in strikes, marches and sit-ins, while the government of Honduras has responded with ruthless repression. Speaking Sept. 6 on the resistance station Radio Globo, Juan Barahona, assistant coordinator of FNRP and president of the United Workers Federation, said he had never seen such brutality by the military and police in Honduras, not even in the 1980s.

September promises to be even more intense.

Hondurans have been in the streets and organizing in the countryside ever since June 28, 2009, when a coup turned the country over to the military and the oligarchs: the 10 Honduran families that own the land and corporations, along with U.S. transnationals. The coup regime under Roberto Micheletti removed legally elected President Manuel Zelaya from office and instituted a series of draconian measures that stripped the population of their rights.

During his presidency, Zelaya had responded to demands by workers and peasants to increase the minimum wage and improve conditions for the majority of the population. With the covert acquiescence of the U.S. government, which had criticized Zelaya's anti-imperialist reforms, the Honduran oligarchy took control of the nation of 8 million people.

Though Washington claimed to oppose the coup, it favored a fraudulent "election" process that, in January, brought the stooge Porfirio (Pepe) Lobo Sosa to presidency. Lobo is under the military and oligarchy's total control and has used the police and army to repress the population throughout the country since his election. Though scores of people, including journalists, have been murdered, tortured and disappeared since Lobo's election, the U.S. government maintains that Honduras has been "restored to democracy." (Agence France-Presse, Aug. 29)

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## WORKERS WORLD STATEMENT

## On 9/11: Defend the Islamic Center

Anyone progressive is outraged by the Tea Party and its ultra-right supporters' poisonous attack against Muslims that is the essence of their campaign to stop the building of an Islamic Community Center near the World Trade Center site. An additional threat comes from these reactionaries' ploy to rally on Sept. 11 at the site and exploit the grieving relatives of 9/11 victims.

It is the duty and responsibility of working-class organizations to defend the Muslim people in their entirety in the strongest way possible. We must also show and build solidarity with our millions of working-class Muslim sisters and brothers.

This racist offensive is a multi-edged threat. A close look shows that working-class organizations must give priority to

confronting and stopping it.

With this reactionary offensive, right-wing Republicans are playing on a mixture of racism and anti-Muslim bigotry to help win control of Congress. This ploy is typical U.S. racist electoral politics. Think Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy" or Ronald Reagan's 1980 opening campaign speech in Philadelphia, Miss., which identified his candidacy with KKK racism at the site of the 1964 murders of civil rights workers.

An additional goal of the ultra-right — Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, Newt Gingrich and their ilk — is to pretend to speak for U.S. workers with this hate campaign. They want to scapegoat Muslims for problems now facing millions, including growing personal debt, lower wages, unemployment, home seizures and evic-

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## LOS ANGELES

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## Western conference calls for socialist unity

The Sept. 4 conference on socialism included Workers World Party leaders, John Parker and Teresa Gutierrez.

Go to page 11 to read more.



WW PHOTOS: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE, MONICA MOOREHEAD, BOB MCCUBBIN

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# More fracking woes Water all around ... Or is there?

By **Betsey Piette**

Much of the focus on the rapid expansion of natural gas extraction through hydrofracturing, or “fracking,” has centered on methane leaks and chemical contamination of residential water wells. In Dimock, Pa., more than 15 residents sued Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., charging permanent damage to their wells.

However, another concern is the impact of fracking on renewable sources of fresh water. Some fear that this drilling process may be draining valuable and irreplaceable water resources.

The process of hydrofracturing starts when a well is drilled thousands of feet down and horizontally to reach shale formations deep beneath the earth’s surface where natural gas is “trapped.” The gas is released when the shale is “fracked” — broken up by a mixture of water, sand and chemicals forced down the well. Anywhere from 1 million to 9 million gallons of water are used per frack. A well may be fracked more than once.

According to newsroom ProPublica, in July 2009 there were already 52,700 natural gas wells in Pennsylvania, second only to Texas’ 76,436. These numbers were compiled before a boom in new leases due to Pennsylvania’s lack of regulation. With the pace of drilling increasing, it is estimated that more than 30,000 new natural gas wells could be developed in the Upper Delaware River Basin in coming years.

To open the existing Pennsylvania wells required between 53 billion to 475 billion gallons of water. If all the estimated wells are drilled, another 30 billion to 150 billions of water would be needed.

Where does all this water come from? Trucking water to a well site is expensive. Drillers have found that it’s cheaper to run a fire hose from a local source, be it a river, stream, creek, lake or pond.

Regulations for drawing water vary from state to state. In Pennsylvania companies are required to seek permits that stipulate the volume, in millions of gallons of water, to be drawn each day from specific fresh water sources. Enforcement of these permits is sporadic. Four gas companies have already been caught withdrawing water from trout streams without permission.

A list of water sources approved for drillers provided by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission includes the Susquehanna River, the Chemung River, and numerous creeks, streams and ponds in 10 northeastern Pennsylvania counties. In Bradford County alone, more than 31 million gallons of water could potentially be removed from local water sources in one day’s time.

In early September, a subcontractor for Cabot Oil and Gas requested permits to withdraw water from the Susquehanna River where it runs near the entrance of a public, recreational park in Tunkhannock, Pa. The company offered a lease fee of \$500 a year.

## Impact on Earth’s fresh water resources

More than 70 percent of the earth’s surface is covered by water, but only 2.5 percent is fresh water. Much of it is frozen under polar icecaps, present as soil moisture or in deep underground aquifers not accessible for human use.

The less than 1 percent that is accessible is found in lakes, rivers, reservoirs and underground sources shal-

low enough to be tapped. While fresh water is a renewable resource, the world’s supply is steadily decreasing. During the 20th century more than half the world’s wetlands were lost to agriculture use and land development.

According to Wilma Subra, technical advisor for the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, “The withdrawal of large quantities of surface water could substantially impact the availability of the surface water resources downstream and damage the aquatic life in the surface water bodies. When groundwater resources are used in the fracturing process, the groundwater aquifers can be drawn down and result in water wells in the area going dry.” (http://leanweb.org/)

Writing in the Round River Blog, Brian Creek questioned the impact that demand for local water resources, in order to drill in the Michigan Antrim Shale region, could have on the Jordan, Michigan’s first wild and scenic river. He estimates that water needed for fracking 10,000 wells there would use more water than flows through the river in a year. (March 19)

## Salt concentration build-up

On average, 25 percent of the fracturing fluid returns to the surface as “flowback” or “produced water.” This water goes to treatment plants, where metals are removed. The chemicals contained in the flowback water are toxic agents and a probable cause of cancers in humans.

The remaining fluid is salt brine, which is then diluted and discharged into the rivers. There is concern over potential environmental harm from salt levels, as the amount of water being released into fresh waters from shale gas operations grows from a trickle to a tidal wave. New, stringent treatment regulations for recycling-produced water in Pennsylvania won’t take effect until 2011.

Pennsylvania is not the only state facing this problem. In Arkansas, wastewater from shale wells was being spread over land farms. The state shut down 11 of the 13 operations when soil chloride concentrations exceeded permitted levels. While not allowed under permits issued, oil-based drilling fluids had also been applied at some sites. In an April 2009 report, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality stated that some fields may have been “irreversibly damaged.”

In July, the House Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies approved \$1 million for the U.S. Geological Survey to study the cumulative impact on water withdrawals for fracking in the Delaware River Basin.

Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) noted, “With over 15 million people relying on the Delaware River for clean drinking water, we simply cannot allow drilling to move forward without first giving full scrutiny to the cumulative effects on water resources throughout the region.”

“Hydraulic fracturing poses a possible health and environmental threat to the millions of people who make their home in the Delaware River watershed and the almost 10 percent of the nation’s population who rely on these waters for drinking, recreational and industrial use,” said Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ).

## Problem is global

The use of hydraulic fracturing is going global. Halliburton, which developed the process, has operations
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## Victory on death row

# Eyewitness testimony raises ‘legitimate questions’

By Sharon Danann

On Sept. 2, Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, bowing to the pressure of online petitions, letters, calls and e-mails from thousands of supporters, commuted Kevin Keith's death sentence to life in prison due to "real and unanswered questions." In doing so he set aside the unanimous recommendation against clemency of the Ohio Parole Board.

As highlighted by the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the prosecution altered the statements of a 6-year-old girl regarding Keith's photo in a lineup, retaining the first few words of her phrase that "it looks like him" but failing to include her caution that the man "did not have a bump on his head." (Aug. 22) Keith has a distinct rise in the center of his head.

The decision came less than two weeks before Keith's Sept. 15 execution date. Keith has always maintained his innocence and has appeals procedures pending.

WW spoke to a number of Keith's supporters and death penalty abolitionists to get their reaction to the commutation.

"We will not stop until his case is thrown out," the Rev. Renard Torrence, Keith's childhood friend and tireless advocate, said. "This case blows open the whole issue of eyewitness testimony, which is notoriously unreliable. This could help so many people."

Strickland's statement pointed to "many legitimate questions that, in theory, could ultimately result in his conviction being overturned altogether," Torrence said, noting that the governor indicated his willingness to review the matter again for possible further action.

Huge numbers of prisoners have been convicted largely based on eyewitness testimony. Juries typically do not understand how faulty witness memory may be or how lineups can be manipulated, not to mention the deals offered to witnesses to provide false testimony.

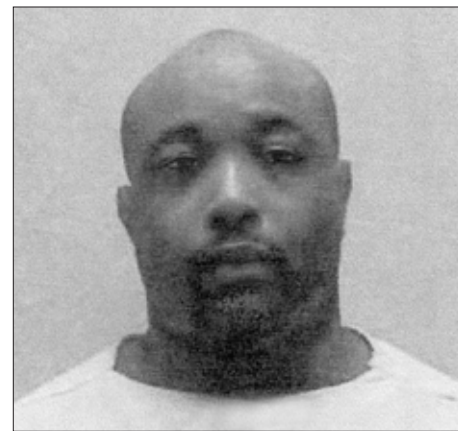
Keith's case, demonstrating the substantial flaws in this kind of evidence, could potentially help many who are languishing behind bars. This would include Troy Davis; political prisoners such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Lucasville upris-

ing prisoners and Imam Jamil Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown); and many other innocent people on death row. The implications for the legal system as a whole are enormous.

"This opens up some eyes for justice-loving people as to the workings of the penal institution," declared Abdul Qahhar. "As chairman of the [Cleveland] New Black Panther Party, I've worked with the Jericho [Movement] and with Amnesty [International]. We've got many ancestors who need amnesty. I commend the activists who have been working to expose the system of tainted evidence, including what we call snitches."

Kunta Kenyatta, author of the book, "Life after Life: A Successful Return to Society," said, "I didn't think the governor would have the courage to give clemency. They usually only give it in a lame duck session." Kenyatta's friend Siddique Abdullah Hasan is on death row for his alleged leadership role in a Lucasville, Ohio, prison uprising in 1993.

"I am so happy when something good finally happens in this rotten criminal in-



Kevin Keith

justice system! Hats off to all who worked to make the commutation in Ohio possible," added Gloria Rubac, organizer with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

"Shaka Sankofa was executed in Texas because of one wrong eyewitness identification," Rubac continued. "The state of Texas has had more DNA-based exonerations than any other state in the country. Since most cases do not have DNA evidence to test, I wonder how many others are sitting in cages in prison or waiting on an execution because they have not been able to prove their innocence." According to the Innocence Project of Texas, 80 percent of the first 40 exonerations in Texas involved faulty identification.

Theresa Lyons, chairperson of Loved Ones Of Prisoners, whose grandson is on Ohio's death row, is encouraged. Her comment: "This is what we all have been hoping for." □

# Denver struggles against police brutality, gentrification

*Shareef Aleem started the Aurora, Colo., chapter of Cop Watch and was a leading member of Communities United against Police Brutality in Colorado. He is the founder of New Ghetto Boogieology and hosts a radio show on Denver's KGNU. Aleem was charged with second degree aggravated assault on a cop during a Regents meeting for Colorado University Professor Ward Churchill in 2006, but was later found not guilty.*

*The following interview was conducted by Denver activist Melissa Kleinman.*

**MK:** Recently there have been a few struggles in Denver. Can you tell us what happened at the Zona's Tamales restaurant, in the historically Black neighborhood of Five Points?

**Aleem:** The police did a vice sting on owner Zona Moore, an 84-year-old Black woman, for allegedly having

received stolen merchandise. The cops say her brother bought a stolen TV from someone. They charged Zona with theft by receiving. Meanwhile, a nuisance abatement was filed against her Zona's Tamales, based on accusations of loud customers outside the restaurant.

Over the last 10 years the city has used whatever means to take over not only Black-owned businesses, but Black people's homes as well. Zona's restaurant sits on prime real estate for condominiums that Black people in the area can't afford.

Her restaurant has been in the Five Points community for over 40 years. In previous years she met with the police and the city because as the neighborhood became gentrified she received noise complaints. Destroying her business is a mission they have had for some time now. This was their latest effort to get her out.

**MK:** How did the community organize a defense for Zona?

**Aleem:** When Zona was arrested — the elder was taken to jail in an ambulance — her daughter contacted me. Three days later we held a rally in Five Points consisting of community leaders, respected businesses and supporters. There were over 100 people. The community doesn't want to see her shut down. This won't be the end of it, even though she's still in business.

**MK:** Recently coverage has been circulating about a police brutality case in Denver's Lower Downtown area. Can you explain the case?

**Aleem:** In April of 2009 Michael DeHerrera was talking on his cell phone to his dad while police beat his friend. He told his dad, "They are beating up Sean." A cop, hearing the conversation, grabbed DeHerrera, threw him to the ground and beat him with a flip jack, which is steel



Shareef-Aleem, right

with leather wrapped around it.

The cops later lied on the police report, saying that DeHerrera tried to punch the officer, but a video proves that is a lie.

**MK:** How did you organize support for DeHerrera?

**Aleem:** There has been a meeting with the Denver manager of safety. The Black and Latino/a communities are asking that the two police officers involved be fired. There was a march in late August with that demand. The officers were only given a three-day suspension. If the cops are not fired, then the manager of safety should resign.

**MK:** How can we support Moore and DeHerrera?

**Aleem:** People can write letters to the city of Denver at Denver Board of Ethics, 201 W. Colfax Ave., Dept. 703, Denver, CO 80202. The letters should include a statement demanding the officers in DeHerrera's case be fired and that Zona be able to keep her business in Five Points.

**MK:** Denver is close to Arizona. How do you feel Colorado can support the struggle there?

**Aleem:** First and foremost we should boycott Arizona, as well as any business or sports team that supports the anti-immigrant legislation. When the Arizona Diamondbacks come to Colorado, for example, we should be there with signs. We also need to create awareness that this could happen in Colorado. I recently had a student on the radio show who participated in some student actions against what's happening in Arizona. □

# Fifth anniversary for hurricane survivors

Five years after the U.S. government let Black and poor people drown and starve in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, 70 survivors and supporters gathered in New York City's Solidarity Center on Aug. 29. Following the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the criminal negligence of Bush and the total incompetence of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, people are now being hit by the BP oil spill. But they're still fighting back.

People marched from Union Square to the Solidarity Center for a rally co-chaired by hurricane survivors Jennifer Jones and Ivory Parker. Jones gave awards to 30 organizations and individuals.

Harold Toussaint, a contributor to the book, "Overcoming Katrina," spoke of his long battles against FEMA. Christine Lewis announced that the newly signed Domestic Workers Law would give protection to 200,000 workers who drudge in rich people's homes.



PHOTOS: JOHNNIE STEVENS

The highlight of the rally was a magnificent brass band from Harlem. When they started to play the song, "When the Saints Come Marching In," it was like New Orleans had come up to New York City.

— Steve Millies



# Strike out SB1070!

## San Diego protests Arizona Diamondbacks

By Zola Muhammad  
San Diego

A protest took place Aug. 25 at the new Petco Park in San Diego when the Padres played the Arizona Diamondbacks. The protest opposed SB1070 and supported the boycotting of Arizona. It was also to tell Major League Baseball to move the 2011 All-Star game out of Arizona. There are plans to protest at Petco Park until the game is moved to another state.

The anti-racist protest had many more people than the counter protest made up of Minutemen and Tea Party members, including Barbara Coe, co-writer of the failed anti-immigrant California Prop 187 and founder of the so-called California Coalition for Immigration Reform. This group is considered a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.



Activist being arrested for protesting attacks on immigrants, at Petco Park, on Aug. 25.

Inside the game there were a few strategically placed protesters, who decided to take to the field with the Mexican flag. They were arrested once security finally caught them. One of these courageous protesters was Rebecca Starr, who gave this writer the following statement:

“I had been feeling like I wasn’t contributing enough to the struggle for immigrant rights. I wanted to do something more. I called an activist friend in Tijuana, Mexico, who told me about the ball game coming up against the Arizona Diamondbacks, and how activists had done some pretty successful direct actions around the country, particularly by disrupting games.

“The call is to strangle Arizona into being humane toward one of the primary sources of their income, migrant labor. I felt as though migrant workers were being blamed while I feel so grateful for their contributions to our society. Part of the boycott of Arizona at this point involves trying to get the All-Star game moved out of that state. There’s

no way all that money should be flowing into a state whose legislators are mandating hate, racial profiling, and domestic terrorism by way of SB1070.

“So several of us went to the game, sat in the front row, and when the second batter of the third inning came up, we made a dash for it! Two of us got onto the field. I made it out toward second base, waving a Mexican flag and wearing a Mexican flag shirt, on the back of which I’d written, ‘THANK A MIGRANT WORKER.’

“I was taken down pretty quickly, handcuffed, and eventually booked. I spent the night in detention and received \$1,000 bail. Other activists paid the 10 percent of it needed, and I went home. I get arraigned on Oct. 7.

“I encourage anyone interested in this issue to consider similar direct actions whenever and wherever the Diamondbacks are playing!” □

## Feds slap down Sheriff Arpaio

# But only to strengthen their assault on immigrants

By Deirdre Griswold

Joe Arpaio has run the notorious sheriff’s department in Arizona’s Maricopa County since 1992.

From 2004 through November 2007, Arpaio was the target of 2,150 lawsuits in U.S. District Court and hundreds more in Maricopa County courts. More than \$50 million worth of claims were filed about the brutal prison conditions under Arpaio — 50 times as many lawsuits as filed against the jail systems of New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston combined. (Phoenix New Times, Dec. 20, 2007)

The police under Arpaio’s command have acted so brutally that the county has had to actually pay out \$42 million in legal settlements to victims of abuse.

Arpaio revels in his reputation. His vicious attitude toward both immigrants and citizens, particularly Latinos and Latinas, has made him the target of numerous exposés and investigations.

The protests against him have been constant and growing, especially since his department began enforcing the anti-

immigrant Arizona law SB1070, which gives police the right to stop, search and arrest people on the street for no other reason than their appearance — racial profiling, pure and simple.

Tens of thousands have marched in the streets of Phoenix calling for an end to the criminalization of undocumented immigrants. Students have chained themselves to gates. Demonstrations have erupted against Arizona sports teams wherever they go. Scores of organizations have heeded the call to boycott the state until the law is overturned and have canceled conventions and meetings there.

After SB1070 went into effect and mass roundups intensified in Latino/a neighborhoods, the jails became so crowded that Arpaio opened a Tent City to hold the overflow of detainees. He was caught on video laughingly referring to it as a “concentration camp.” (Phoenix Times, Aug. 2)

The mass movement against Arpaio and SB1070 grew so tumultuous that in late July a federal judge ruled that parts of the law were illegal — like the police-state provision that made it a state crime (!) for a person not to be carrying immi-

gration documents.

Now the Justice Department has filed a lawsuit against Arpaio and his office for refusing to cooperate with its investigations of alleged discrimination on the basis of national origin — a violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Arpaio’s office had signed agreements with the Justice Department promising to cooperate in such investigations and had received federal money as a result, but then violated the contract.

Clearly, Arpaio has not only made life hell for hundreds of thousands of working people and their families but has also become a thorn in the side of his boss, the Justice Department.

The federal government itself has been carrying out raids on undocumented workers through Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the FBI. It expects to deport 400,000 immigrants this year — 10 percent more than in 2008, the last year of the Bush administration. But these agencies of capitalist repression want to do it their way, without the fascist grandstanding of Arpaio and other Arizona politicians who are whipping up

anti-immigrant bigotry for two reasons: to win votes away from the Democrats and to find a scapegoat for the mass anger over unemployment and foreclosures.

At the same time that the Obama administration is suing Arpaio, it is sending National Guard troops to the border with Mexico, where it is extending the wall between the two countries. Clearly, the U.S. corporations that own both the Democratic and Republican parties exercise the right to go anywhere in the world to exploit workers, while at the same time they get the government here to stigmatize and surround immigrants with insuperable obstacles in order to keep millions of such workers as a hunted, low-wage workforce with no legal rights.

Nevertheless, immigrant workers and their allies are fighting back. They have staged magnificent May 1 demonstrations for the past five years and are a vital force in reviving the labor movement. A united working-class movement that builds solidarity among all nationalities and demands legalization is the only truly effective way to eradicate the poisonous Joe Arpaio. □

# Activists tell Bank of America: Stop foreclosures!

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs along with other labor, community and student supporters took on Bank of America on Sept. 1 with a protest outside a main BOA branch in downtown Detroit. Protesters were livid that BOA, which has received billions in bailout money from the U.S. government, refuses to modify Michelle Hart’s mortgage.

Protesters loudly chanted, “Stop foreclosures, stop evictions! Moratorium now!” and “Bail out the people, not the banks!” while hoisting placards demanding relief for the Hart family; a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs; and a federally funded jobs program.

Like millions of people around the country, Hart lost her job, fell behind in

her mortgage and then found temporary work at reduced wages. Now she is able and willing to make her mortgage payments, but Countrywide and Bank of America refuse to modify her loan to reflect her reduced income. Hart and her elderly mother, who has pancreatic cancer, face imminent eviction from their home in Southfield, Mich.

According to a Moratorium NOW! leaflet, “The bank refuses to modify her usurious, adjustable-rate mortgage, even though it signed a binding Consent Agreement with the Attorney General’s office on Oct. 6, 2008, to modify loans. ...

“Ms. Hart has fought in court for a year and a half now to get BOA and Countrywide to abide by the Consent Agreement and modify her loan. But the bank refuses and is forging full steam ahead to evict her and her mother. ... BOA would rather toss them out on the street than negotiate a loan modification.”

Coalition activists are also targeting

BOA for failing to participate in Michigan’s Help for Hardest Hit Homeowners program. Not a single one of the major lenders has volunteered for this program, which is supposed to help unemployed workers receive loan modifications and save their homes. BOA and other banks and lenders don’t participate because they can receive from the federal government the full value of foreclosed homes, while families are put out on the street.

The coalition is asking people around the country to contact BOA’s CEO at brian.t.moynihan@bankofamerica.com and ask why BOA refuses to modify Michelle Hart’s loan and refuses to participate in the Helping Hardest Hit Homeowners program.

*Bryan G. Pfeifer contributed to this article.*



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER



## NEW YORK STATE

# Historic victory for domestic workers

By Dolores Cox  
New York

After a militant six-year campaign of marching, rallying and lobbying, Domestic Workers United won a New York State Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. On Aug. 31, New York Gov. David Paterson signed this landmark bill into law; it goes into effect after 90 days.

This is a civil rights victory for domestic workers who have struggled for 75 years against exclusions from federal labor laws, including the New Deal's National Labor Relations Act of 1935, the Occupational Safety and Health Act and employment discrimination provisions in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

This is the first legislation in the U.S. to give basic rights and protections to domestic workers. It will cover New York state's 200,000 domestic workers, including nannies, elderly caregivers and housekeepers, who are mainly women of color.

The signing ceremony took place at Harlem's Dwyer Cultural Center. Members of DWU, grassroots activist organizations, the NAACP and unions attended, along with federal and state politicians and media.

Speakers called the law "a milestone" and "groundbreaking," noting that it would give "parity, justice, fairness and equity in the workplace" to these "essential caregivers" who are "an often invisible workforce." They called Harriet Tubman an inspiration for their struggle.

The bill's sponsors were state Sen. Diane Savino, Assemblyperson Keith Wright and Assembly Labor Committee Chair Susan John. Savino said that domestic workers make other work possible and asserted that this law sends a clear message across the country that domestic workers' rights must be recognized.

Wright, who said he was the grandson of domestic workers, thanked and ap-

plauded DWU's tenacity for fighting for this bill for years. He said, "We must see that the promises are kept."

DWU Director Priscilla Gonzalez spoke "as a proud daughter of a domestic worker" and said, "It's a new day for DWU, with more work ahead for winning paid vacations and sick days. Dignity and respect mean so much for us. We owe this great moment to those who sacrificed their time to organize."

Gonzalez added, "We are making waves throughout the country and the world. Today we have proven that the power to change the world is within us. This is an example of what can be done and of the power of women of color together. We made history today. Change happens when we stand together for justice, dignity and respect! We have toiled for centuries in the shadows of slavery."

Gov. Paterson stated, "Today we correct an historic injustice. ... Domestic workers are heroes of our society. ... They are our backbone; the wind beneath our wings."

The new law requires of employers: overtime pay for domestic workers at time-and-a-half after a 40-hour week or after 44 hours for sleep-in workers; one day off a week; three days paid leave annually after one year; and inclusion in disability benefits laws. It requires advanced notice before termination, recourse for sexual harassment complaints and minimum standards of protection from racial discrimination. It mandates the Department of Labor to consider collective bargaining and the right to organize.



WWW PHOTOS: ANNE PRUDEN

Aug. 31 press conference announcing victory passage of Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, in Harlem, N.Y.

DWU will continue the fight for a living wage and health insurance, both of which they had originally demanded.

## History of migrant domestic workers

The migration of African Americans from the "Jim Crow" South brought Black workers seeking a better life and decent jobs to the North, Midwest and West Coast. Because of racial discrimination, many Black women could only find work as domestic workers — jobs that many had been confined to in the legally segregated South.

In New York, they were often recruited on street corners and other gathering sites. Many became sleep-in domestic workers in the suburban homes of white families, often under conditions of indentured servitude. Those who worked in the city also experienced exploitation, emotional, verbal and physical abuse, sexual harassment, long hours and low pay.

Today, migrant women from the Ca-

ribbean, Africa, Latin America and Asia have joined African-American domestic workers; they also suffer racism and discrimination. Many of them have come from countries that have been negatively impacted economically and environmentally by U.S. corporate greed, destruction, and Pentagon militarism.

DWU is a grassroots organization of Caribbean, Latina and African domestic workers, which was initiated in 2000 by Filipinas in the Women Workers Project of CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities, together with Andolan (Organizing South Asian Workers). They or-



ganized to build power, raise the level of respect for their work and establish fair labor standards in their industry. (domesticworkersunited.org)

DWU activists say, "Tell Dem Slavery Done!" as they organize to build a movement to end exploitation and oppression for all.

This victory is one for all poor and working people. DWU organizers want more labor organizations to join the struggle. They aim for more states to follow New York's precedent, to provide legal and human rights for the 2.5 million domestic workers throughout the country. This is only the beginning of their fight. DWU asserts, "We have a dream that one day all work will be valued equally." □

# 'Race to the Top' threatens teachers, public education

By Judy Greenspan

Capitalism has always been very fond of races — including the race to conquer, the race to exploit and the race to accumulate as much wealth as possible, all at the expense of the workers, the poor and the oppressed. The U.S. government's recent unveiling of a new race in education, the "Race to the Top," is part of the same corporate contest. Only this time, the survival of public education is on the line.

In California, in order to be eligible for this "race" and its \$700 million prize, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the state Legislature became cheerleaders for Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's plan and passed two draconian measures. The new laws provide mechanisms for teachers to be evaluated by student scores (known as the value-added model) on multiple choice, standardized tests and for parents to respond to student failure on these tests by firing teachers and closing these schools.

Most recently, the Los Angeles Times joined the race by publishing an analysis by a statistical researcher from the Rand Corporation that included the names of teachers and the test scores of their students. The threat of the future publication of an expansive "hit list" of teachers and their students' test scores has been vigorously opposed by the United Teachers of Los Angeles, the California Federation of Teachers and other education associations around the country.



Richmond, Calif. community rallies to stop school closures and support teachers during contract negotiations.

WWW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

A recently released report, "Framework for Providing All Students an Opportunity to Learn," notes the "state of emergency" in the delivery of education to African-American, Latino/a and other communities of color in this country. It calls for "'universal' early education for all students in all states; policies that will provide access to highly effective teachers for all students ... and community schools that offer wraparound services." (<http://naacpldf.org/>)

This 17-page report issued in July by such groups as the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, the NAACP, the National Council for Educating Black Children and the Rainbow PUSH Coalition criticizes the competitive, corporate nature of Race to the Top. It calls for a decreased reliance on standardized test scores as a measure

of teacher effectiveness. It also notes the important role that public schools play in poor communities and states that school closures should be only a "measure of last resort."

According to Diane Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education under President George W. Bush and now a professor at New York University, "Access to federal funding should be based on need, not competition." Not surprisingly, the coalition of civil rights and education groups concurs.

Ravitch goes further to warn about the adverse consequences of evaluating teachers on their test scores. In an Aug. 1 Huffington Post article, Ravitch states, "It will make the current standardized tests of basic skills more important than ever. ... The curriculum will be narrowed. ...

There will be even less time available for the arts, science, history. ... Teachers will teach to the test."

Race to the Top was never intended to provide poor communities with adequate funding to improve the quality of teachers and instruction. After all, it was presented as a race — only those states that could jump through the hoops would get the funding. Even with its anti-teacher, school dismantlement legislation, California lost its bid in the second round of Race to the Top funding. Sometimes a race is worth losing.

A former Los Angeles school teacher, Walt Gardner, felt the same. In a Dec. 30 article in the Christian Science Monitor, he noted that public education does not thrive on competition and should not be treated as a business. "The practical way to mend the educational system is by implementing economic and social reforms that focus on the children," Gardner stated.

Duncan's plan to reward states that dismantle "poorly performing" public schools across this country and replace them with privately financed charter schools is a frontal assault against public education. Only a broad coalition of parents, students, teachers and education allies can save public schools and guarantee the academic success of all children.

*This author is a 3rd grade teacher at a Title I elementary school in Richmond, Calif.*



# WikiLeaks reveal CIA told media to promote women’s horror stories in Afghanistan

By Joyce Chediak

Recent WikiLeaks disclosures reveal just how low the U.S. government and its media mouthpieces will stoop to revive support for its occupation of Afghanistan.

A March 11 secret memorandum from the CIA’s Red Cell problem-solving group, now made public, suggests “promoting women’s horror stories” to bolster faltering support for the Afghan war, says John Gorenfeld in the Aug. 16 New York Observer.

Gorenfeld continues, “Subtitling their memo ‘Why Counting On Apathy Might Not Be Enough,’ the agents warned that sending more soldiers to Afghanistan threatened to outrage the French and German publics. ‘Indifference might turn into active hostility,’ they wrote, especially if soldiers and civilians die. The fix? Instead of using generals in desert camo [camouflage] as the face of the NATO mission, use oppressed Afghan women.

“These victims could make ‘ideal messengers,’ the analysts wrote, ‘in humanizing the ISAF [NATO International Security Assistance Force] role in combating the Taliban because of women’s ability to speak personally and credibly about their experiences under the Taliban, their aspirations for the future, and their fears of a Taliban victory.’ The report also urged that these stories be pitched to TV shows with large female audiences.”

Surely the CIA knows that the reality is that under the U.S. occupation “women’s rights have actually deteriorated as a direct consequence of deliberate U.S. policy, including alliances with warlords hostile to women’s rights,” according to Sonali Kolhatkar, co-director of the Afghan Women’s Mission of the International Humanities Center (Women’s eNews, July 26, 2009).

**Taliban not the only culprits**

Meanwhile, major U.S. media are enthusiastically following the CIA’s guidelines. That the U.S. occupation hurts Afghan women didn’t matter to Time magazine when it pictured on its Aug. 9 cover a woman whose nose had been cut off by a relative living under the U.S. occupation. Time wrongly blamed the mutilation on the Taliban, and implied that a Pentagon withdrawal from the country would be “abandoning” Afghan women.

But The Nation, a progressive magazine, blew the whistle in an article entitled, “Afghan Women Have Already Been Abandoned” (Aug. 12). Ann Jones, who recently returned from Afghanistan, said the woman on Time’s cover, Bibi Aisha, told her that she had been mutilated by her father-in-law as a punishment, and the Taliban had nothing to do with it. But to the CIA and, it seems, to Time, what happens to Afghan women is irrelevant, as long as these women’s sufferings can be exploited to provide backing for the war.

There is another sordid revelation concerning this Time cover story. Its author, the magazine’s Afghanistan Bureau Chief Aryn Baker, did not disclose that she personally profits from the U.S. occupation. John Gorenfeld reports that Baker’s spouse, Tamim Samee, “is a board member of an Afghan government minister’s \$100 million project advocating foreign investment in Afghanistan, and has run two companies ... that have solicited and won development contracts with the assistance of the international military, including private sector infrastructure projects favored by U.S.-backed leader Hamid Karzai.” (New York Observer, Aug. 12)

Time responded to the Observer investigation by moving Baker to another, undisclosed country, but continues to defend her specious article as a “straightforward reported piece.”

With the generous help of the establishment media, the U.S. government would have us believe that Afghan and Moslem culture is terrible and misogynist; and that Afghan women need to be “saved” from their culture and from men by a U.S. invasion. This is a false and racist bill of goods.

Afghan women can never find freedom under an occupying power. For women to have their rights, the very first need is for the U.S. to leave Afghanistan and stop interfering in its affairs.

Meanwhile, by relegating violence against women and forced sex with women and children solely to Middle Eastern and Muslim cultures, the major media downplay the situation of women here.

The National Organization for Women points out that there is “an epidemic of gender based violence and sexual assault” right here in the U.S., and the numbers, NOW says, are shocking. “In 2005, 1,181

women were murdered by an intimate partner. That’s an average of three women every day. Of all the women murdered in the U.S., about one-third were killed by an intimate partner.”

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control says that women experience about 4.8 million intimate-partner-related physical assaults and rapes every year. The U.S. Department of Justice itself explains that a woman is beaten every 15 seconds and a woman raped every two minutes. The National Crime Victimization Survey of 2006 revealed that more than 600 women a day were raped or sexually assaulted in the U.S.

If Washington is so concerned about violence against women in Afghanistan, why isn’t it doing anything about violence against women in the U.S.? Why don’t the media start a campaign exposing the maiming and killing of women here by spouses and lovers?

The FBI also estimates that well over 100,000 children and young women are sexually trafficked in the U.S. today. They range in age from 9 to 19, with the average age being 11. This is sexual slavery of children — right here. Where are the media exposés?

**Western priests rape thousands of children**

When it comes to pedophilia, Catholic priests have repeatedly raped thousands of children in their charge for decades without punishment. In the U.S. “only a fraction of the perpetrators have been jailed and little been done to punish those who covered up the crimes.” (Agence France Press, April 4) The U.S. government did nothing while victims, mostly working-class boys, were intimidated into silence, and “abusive priests moved to unsuspecting parishes where they found new prey.”

When researchers from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice were given access to church files, they “found that more than 4,392 Catholic priests and deacons sexually abused at least 10,677 American children between 1950 and 2002. Just 615 of those incidents had been reported to law enforcement and only 384 clergy members were criminally charged, resulting in 252 convictions. A further 3,091 abusive clergy and 4,568 victims were identified from 2004 through 2009, according to a report published [in February].”

**Are cops the U.S. Taliban?**

The press has reported many stories of Afghan women under the subjection of men with guns who kill and maim without being reported to police or government. That doesn’t happen here — or does it?

Barbara Sheehan faces 15 years to life for killing her spouse, a retired police officer, and will be tried in Queens, N.Y. For 20 years, her spouse, who carried two guns at all times, beat her black and blue, threatened to push her out of cars, humiliated her, pulled guns on her and taunted her. He told her that if she left him, he would kill her family and their children. He dared her to call the police. “I couldn’t call 911. He was 911,” Sheehan said. The police “would never have arrested him. And then what would happen when they left?” (Women’s eNews, July 13)

Women like Sheehan have no one to turn to and often nowhere to go. Many women’s shelters refuse to take in the abused wives and families of police for fear of retaliation by that cop and his buddies on the force.

“Domestic violence is two to four times more common in police families than in the general population,” according to Purple Berets, a group which advocates for victims of sexual assault. “In a nationwide survey of 123 police departments, 45 percent had no specific policy for dealing with officer-involved domestic violence. — The most common discipline imposed for a sustained allegation of domestic violence was counseling.” (purpleberets.org)

This is the U.S. version of the Taliban, and it’s a national phenomenon. The outcome can be very tragic. For example, Jeffery Grahn, a Clackamas County, Ore., sheriff sergeant, had been reported three times to his superiors in the police department for spousal abuse, including holding a loaded gun at his spouse’s head, and also for being “suicidal.” But an investigation by the police buried the matter, and allowed Grahn to keep his badge and gun. On Feb. 12 Grahn killed his spouse Charlotte, two of her friends, and then himself. (Women’s eNews, Aug. 4)

If Washington doesn’t stand up to this kind of violence against women here, how could it possibly stop violence against women in Afghanistan?

*Next: Washington’s agent of salvation for Afghan women is the Pentagon. What is the Pentagon’s record on women?*

# Michigan shows solidarity with Palestine

By Megan Spencer  
Dearborn, Mich.

Several hundred people gathered Sept. 3 in Dearborn, Mich., for an Al-Quds Day rally in solidarity with the people of Palestine. Al-Quds Day, or Jerusalem Day, is an international demonstration in support of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, as well as in support of all oppressed people throughout the world. Al-Quds Day has been celebrated historically on the last Friday of Ramadan.

Dawud Walid, executive director of the Michigan branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, spoke at the rally. He talked about the peace talks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE  
Commemoration of Al-Quds Day on Sept. 3 in Dearborn, Mich.

Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas, citing the exclusion of Gaza’s elected political party from the discussions as a reason why the

flotilla massacre, also spoke at the rally. She discussed her experiences as a passenger of the Mavi Marmara, one of the ships in the flotilla organized by activists

talks will likely be ineffective at actually creating peace.

Walid also addressed the perception that the United States is playing the role of mediator in the peace talks. This perception is faulty given the U.S.’s obvious bias, as evidenced by its continued military and economic support of Israel.

Fatima Mohammadi, an Iranian activist and survivor of the May Gaza

seeking to break the blockade on Gaza. In an attempt to deliver humanitarian goods to Gaza’s starved and imprisoned population, the Mavi Marmara was violently raided and seized by Israeli commandos, who killed nine of the activists on board and injured many more. Mohammadi spoke about the importance and difficulty of finding the truth about this event, especially amid the mainstream media outlets that disseminate pro-Israeli propaganda.

The event also featured poetry and music. During the rally, demonstrators shouted chants in support of Palestinian sovereignty and calling for the end of the occupation by Israel. Members of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice and Workers World Party attended the rally and held signs and a banner in solidarity with Palestine. □



Justice for Ahlam Mohsen

Anti-war youth activist faces FBI investigation

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Ahlam Mohsen, a 22-year-old Arab-American and Michigan State University student, was arrested Aug. 16 and charged with two felony counts of stalking and assault after she pied U.S. Sen. Carl Levin at a Democrats meeting in the Michigan town of Big Rapids.

Mohsen spent more than a week in the Mecosta County Jail, held on a quarter-million-dollar bond requiring \$50,000 in bail. Her “crime” was that she carefully placed an apple pie into the senator’s face as an anti-war protest against U.S. involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan and occupied Palestine. Levin is chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee and fully backs U.S. slaughters and occupations around the globe.

A webpage in support of Mohsen on the social networking site Facebook has more than 300 members. Activists in Detroit with the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice protested Aug. 20 at the federal building and called for Levin to have the charges dropped and release Mohsen from jail.

Her release on Aug. 24 could not be considered a victory, however. The state charges against Mohsen were temporarily “suspended” and the bond lowered because an FBI investigation was launched to determine whether Mohsen will be charged with federal crimes for assaulting

a member of Congress. The state could pursue its case again at any time.

MECAWI organizers have called Mohsen’s case “an outrageous attack on free speech and the right to protest.” It involves, they note, an attempted takeaway of civil liberties compounded with anti-Arab, anti-immigrant and racist animus meant to divide and divert people.

Mohsen’s action took place after fellow activist Max Kantar read a statement to Levin that he and Mohsen had prepared. Regarding U.S.-led sanctions on Iraq during the 1990s, they told Levin: “The victims were poor people, children, the sick and the elderly. Publicly available declassified government documents now reveal the murderous (and ultimately successful) intentions of the U.S. government to destroy Iraq’s water system and then to systematically ban the importation of crucial items such as chlorine — the effects of which were designed, according to top officials, to unleash ‘disease epidemics’ which were predicted to affect ‘children in particular.’

“The result? Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children were deliberately murdered, perhaps up to half a million, according to mainstream estimates. Their blood is on your hands.”

Mohsen and Kantar decried Levin’s culpability in Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people. They described the January 2009 Israeli war on Gaza and stated: “Your response to these atrocities

was to co-sponsor a Senate resolution praising the U.S.-organized bloodbath. In fact, for years you have worked diligently to make sure that U.S. taxpayers subsidize these campaigns of murder and oppression against the Palestinian people. — The blood of thousands of Palestinians living under military occupation and apartheid is on your hands.”

The young anti-war activists denounced Levin’s support for U.S. attacks and warfare in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan. They said about Iran: “Your position on Iran — a country that, in stark contrast to Israel, hasn’t attacked its neighbors for centuries — is that ‘all options, including military options, should be on the table.’ In plain terms, this is a threat to bomb Iran, maybe even with nuclear weapons. Such threats are flagrant violations of the U.N. Charter. ... If and when the U.S. or its Israeli client attacks Iran, that blood, too, will be on your hands.”

Kantar and Mohsen called it “both perverse and shameful” that Levin “claims to uphold values like freedom and justice while actively taking part in the murder, mutilation, repression and infliction of suffering on millions of Iraqis, Palestinians, Lebanese, Afghans, Pakistanis and many more peoples living under the whip of U.S. imperialism, from Latin America to Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

“And back home in Michigan, you treat the people you purport to serve with equal contempt. While you go to sleep in your



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Ahlam Mohsen.

Detroit mansion as a millionaire each night, nearly 20,000 human beings in the same city go to bed homeless, on the streets. ... These people could be housed with money you prefer to spend on war. ... While you sit self-righteously in Washington making laws to protect power and privilege, the police systematically brutalize and imprison our state’s African-American population at [a] rate nearly THREE TIMES that of South Africa during the years of apartheid.”

The facts and figures in the statement to Levin are backed up with an attached five pages of documentation and sources. The entire statement and sources can be read online at [www.mecawi.org](http://www.mecawi.org).

A campaign to garner further support for Mohsen is being organized. In the meantime, anti-war and anti-racist activists and all progressives are urged to demand justice for Ahlam Mohsen by contacting Sen. Carl Levin’s office and demanding that he immediately have all investigations and charges against Mohsen dropped. Phone Levin at 313-226-6020; fax 313-226-6948; or e-mail by going to <http://levin.senate.gov/contact/>. □

A tale of two invasions

Imperialism’s legacy in Afghanistan

By Gene Clancy

On Aug. 31, USA Today reported 1,985 NATO coalition deaths in Afghanistan, with 1,248 of them U.S. troops. More than 7,000 have been seriously wounded.

July and August were the most costly months to NATO forces in almost a decade of war and invasion. The Pentagon is attempting to carry out its ballyhooed “surge,” which is supposed to get the U.S. out of the quagmire it has created for itself in Afghanistan.

Of course, these numbers pale when compared to deaths of the Afghan civilians and freedom fighters who, according to one conservative estimate, have suffered nearly 20,000 deaths.

Conservative pundits such as Charles Krauthammer have already begun to blame the Obama administration for a potential defeat. He accuses Obama of “giving our enemy sustenance” by even mentioning the possibility of a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan by July 2011. (Washington Post, Sept. 5) Most people, in the U.S. and around the world, think the date should be much sooner.

An imperialist legacy

In 1839, the British government decided to invade Afghanistan, ostensibly to forestall the Czarist Russian government from increasing its influence there. Their real reason was to support the expansion of the British East India Company.

The British achieved some initial “success”: they killed a lot of Afghans, installed a puppet government and settled

down for a long occupation. Large bags of gold, literally, were handed out to buy off traditional tribal leaders.

Three years later, an entire British army of more than 14,000 men lay dead along the banks of the Kabul River, slaughtered as they tried to escape through the mountain passes. The headless, dismembered corpse of the chief British general hung in the marketplace of Kabul, while the Afghan puppet ruler attempted (unsuccessfully) to convince other Afghans that he had helped persuade the British to leave. (Steven Tanner, “Afghanistan: A Military History,” Da Capo Press, 2009)

The British tried again in 1878, and again they failed. However, before they withdrew, they “preserved British honor” by massacring whole villages and hanging militants from almost every lamppost in Kabul.

In 1893, the British imperialist government in India decided to draw a border

between Afghanistan and British India (which included modern Pakistan). Having failed disastrously in two previous attempts, the British goals were to grab as much of the land and population of Afghanistan as they could, establish a defensive perimeter and control the vital passes through the Hindu Kush mountains.

Afghanistan lost a third of its population and some of its most fertile land, the Peshawar region, in what is today northwestern Pakistan. These are the so-called Northwest Territories, a center of resistance to the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and home to 25 million ethnic Pashtuns. Pashtuns also comprise more than 50 percent of the population of Afghanistan.

The British never went back until 2001 — when they joined the U.S.-led NATO coalition in Afghanistan.

This same region has suffered from unprecedented flooding recently, with more

than 14 million people affected. More than 1 million people are still stranded and starving. The U.S./U.N. response of \$460 million in aid was recently dwarfed by private Muslim charities, which contributed \$1 billion from around the world. More is needed.

However, the principal concern of mainstream pundits has been that the Taliban — which was among the first to offer aid to the victims — may “take advantage” of the flooding to increase their influence. To make their point, the U.S. launched a drone attack that killed an unknown number of people in Peshawar while the flooding was still in progress.

The U.S. seems to be following the template laid down by the British in the nineteenth century. Whether events will turn out the same, or whether the U.S. ruling class will learn from history, remains to be seen. □

Rally supports FORT DIX FIVE

Family and supporters of the Fort Dix Five rallied outside the Federal Court in Philadelphia, where an appeal of the Five’s 2008 convictions was filed on Aug. 31. One banner listed hundreds of innocent Muslims targeted by the FBI’s pre-emptive prosecution campaigns. The Five, who were convicted for allegedly plotting to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey, maintain their innocence.

— Report and photo by Betsey Piette





INTERNATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

By John Catalinotto

IRAQ

U.S. troops in combat

Within a week after President Barack Obama had announced — while trying to avoid a triumphant tone — the end of the U.S. combat mission in Iraq, U.S. troops participated in a firefight at one of the main military commands in Baghdad on Sept. 5.

The announcement occurred simultaneously with an upsurge in attacks, apparently carried out by elements of the Iraqi resistance against the U.S. occupation. Almost all these attacks have been directed at troops or police of the Iraqi puppet government. There have also been mortar attacks on U.S. bases and compounds.

Officials said 12 people were killed in the Sept. 5 attack on the headquarters of Iraq’s 11th Army Division. At least four were soldiers; 36 others were wounded. According to the Baghdad Operations Command, all six insurgents participating in the attack were killed. Most had been wearing explosives. A bomb attack had hit the same military base on Aug. 17, killing 57 young men waiting to join the puppet army. (Sydney Morning Herald, Sept. 5)

The story underlines the fact that the combat in Iraq is far from over, even for U.S. troops. It is interesting that on Sept. 2 the Associated Press sent out a memo to its writers making this point. “To begin with,” the memo read, “combat in Iraq is not over, and we should not uncritically repeat suggestions that it is, even if they come from senior officials. The situation on the ground in Iraq is no different today than it has been for some months.”

Obama’s Aug. 31 statement on Iraq criticized the decision to enter the war there but was friendly to former President George W. Bush. The problem with this contradictory position is that Bush is seen by millions of people, around the world and in the U.S., as a war criminal responsible for causing the deaths of more than 4,000 U.S. troops and at least hundreds of thousands, if not more than a million, Iraqis.

FRANCE

Protests in solidarity with Roma people

Organizers say 100,000 people marched and demonstrated in 130 French cities, including Paris, Marseille and Lyon, on Sept. 4 to protest the rightist

government’s expulsion of Roma people. President Nicolas Sarkozy is scapegoating this part of the immigrant population in an attempt to mobilize reactionary opinion behind his government.

The march of 40,000 in Paris was led by a contingent of Roma (also called “gypsy”) people from France and Eastern Europe. Jean-Pierre Dubois, president of France’s Human Rights League, told Reuters TV, “There are many of us calmly saying that the future of this country is not a return to the old hatreds and racist prejudices.” (Sept. 4)

Large placards reflected a strong position against the Sarkozy government: “Instead of xenophobia and contempt: liberty, equality, fraternity.” (La Haine, Sept. 6)

Roma people, believed to originally have been driven out of India in the 11th century, now live mainly in Europe, with a population there estimated between 4 and 14 million. During the Nazi period in Germany, the Hitler government executed at least a half-million Roma people — more than 90 percent of those arrested.

Sarkozy, who also plans to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 years and cut other social benefits, is meeting hard resistance from the French working class. Some 2 million workers walked out on Sept. 7 to protest the president’s social policies.

ning under the Spanish dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Following the death of Franco and a compromise that allowed the reestablishment of the Spanish king, ETA continued the struggle.

The Spanish state answered with severe repression, not only against the armed fighters of ETA, but against all those who give political support to Basque liberation. The Spanish central government has banned political organizations of the Basque left, such as Herri Batasuna (Unity of the People), from participation in the political process and have jailed many Basque political activists.

The Spanish government of Prime Minister Jose Zapatero has called the current ETA offer to halt armed actions “insufficient.” Despite this initial rejection, some international figures, including Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams in Ireland, have called upon the Spanish government to open negotiations.

Chile

Tribute paid to Allende government

Salvador Allende Gossens was elected president of Chile 40 years ago on Sept. 4, 1970. This year the Alberto Hurtado University held an activity, the Seminar “Chile 1970,” to commemorate Allende’s election and the three years of the Popular Unity government. The meetings analyzed the economic, political and social conditions of that period.

Only some in the U.S. social justice movement know that the slogan, “The people united will never be defeated,” comes from the struggles during the Allende government. People’s musician Victor Jara wrote the music and Sergio Ortega the text in the summer of 1973 as an anthem for the Popular Unity government.

That government was overthrown on Sept. 11, 1973, by a bloody military coup organized by the U.S. CIA. The song, interpreted by Inti Ilmani and many others, was adopted by progressive and workers’ movements worldwide. □

Resistance to Honduran coup regime deepens

*Continued from page 1*

In Bajo Aguán in northern Honduras, peasants demanded the fulfillment of a rural agrarian reform that would have turned their ancestral lands over to them. The Lobo government responded in April with 3,000 heavily armed troops and violent repression of the peasant organizations.

On Sept. 5, the police and military broke up a three-month hunger strike by workers fired from the National Autonomous University. The 150 union workers had protested their firing by engaging in a peaceful strike until the military entered and beat, fired upon and tear-gassed both the workers and students within the walls of the university. The army then took control of the school. (Presente Honduras, Sept. 5, and TeleSUR, Sept. 6)

The Lobo government and its rubber-stamping Congress was still reeling from the victory of a three-week teachers’ strike in August. The teachers, who the government hadn’t paid since February, struck for back pay and to oppose the privatization of education. Despite vicious attacks by police and armed forces, the teachers held firm and won their demands. Lobo (whom some call “Golpepe,” a contraction of the word “golpe,” the Spanish for coup, and Pepe) was forced to promise to get back their pensions — which the Micheletti government had actually stolen — and restore their benefits.

On Aug. 26 the teachers had taken to the streets of capital city Tegucigalpa in support of demands by peasants’ movements for land distribution. The military responded with guns and tear gas. (Resistencia, Aug. 26)

Since May 1, the Honduran resistance has been organizing for “La Constituyente,” a national constituent assembly to replace the present constitution. It has circulated a petition demanding a referendum to begin the process for a people’s constitution.

The current constitution, which was written in 1982 in collusion with the Reagan administration in the U.S., has exacerbated the gap between rich and poor. It

upholds the rights of oligarchs and foreign investors.

Even the U.S. admits that since 2004 the official poverty rate for Honduras has increased from 50 percent of the population to more than 60 percent. (CIA World Factbook) The effects of the global economic crisis have been brutal in Central America, and Honduras is the poorest country in the region.

More than 1 million people have signed the petition for the Constituyente so far. The Resistance demands include land reform; raising the minimum wage; respect for human rights; an end to the persecution and assassination of members of the Resistance; and no privatization of natural resources. This last demand is of particular concern to the Indigenous people of Honduras, who oppose the privatization of Honduras’s rivers.

In addition, the Resistance is calling for international recognition for a national constituent assembly and guarantees for the return of Manuel Zelaya, the coordinator of the national resistance, and 200 more Hondurans forced into exile by the coup.

The Resistance is calling a 12-hour national strike in Tegucigalpa on Sept. 7. When the armed forces so viciously attacked the National University workers on Sept. 5, Lobo issued a warning that anyone supporting the occupation of public buildings or highways would be repressed. But the response of both worker and peasant groups has been to intensify their opposition, calling on all workers, students and peasants to occupy the streets of Tegucigalpa on Sept. 7.

FNRP Assistant Coordinator Juan Barahona said the work stoppage will be the prelude to a general strike that the country’s four trade unions are preparing. (Prensa Latina, Sept. 3)

The Resistance expects to have 1,250,000 signatures calling for the Constituyente by Sept. 15, and notes that the Paro Civico is its first step. The Honduran Resistance has steadfastly moved forward. Its slogan, “They fear us because we have no fear,” is ringing true. □

Basque country

ETA says armed actions on hold

The armed national liberation organization of the Basque people — who live in provinces in both the Spanish and French states — announced on Sept. 5 that it would suspend all armed actions, with the goal of beginning negotiations with the Spanish government that would allow democratic participation in the political process in the Basque region.

The organization ETA, for words in the Basque language meaning “Basque homeland and freedom,” has been fighting for Basque liberation and for socialism for more than 50 years, begin-

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# South African public sector strike suspended

# Labor actions continue in mining sector

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Leaders of the unions involved in the public sector strike in the Republic of South Africa have called for the suspension of the work stoppage in order to discuss the government’s latest offer. An estimated 1.3 million workers have been on strike since Aug. 18 demanding a 8.6 percent pay increase and a 1,000 rand (U.S. \$138) monthly housing allowance. The strike has crippled the educational and health care sectors.

“Labour has decided to suspend the strike and this does not mean we have accepted the state offer,” all 19 unions representing the state workers said in a joint statement. The strike has generated a widespread debate over the future of economic policy within South Africa, which is governed by the ruling African National Congress.

A statement issued by the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Independent Labor Caucus says that the government “succumbed to the demand by labor,” calling it “a victory in the history of public service negotiations where the employer was forced to reopen negotiations.” (CNN, Sept. 6) COSATU is the largest labor federation in the country.

The ANC issued a statement saying that they welcome the suspension of the strike: “We believe this is a step in the right direction in ensuring stability and normality in our public sector offerings, particular around education and health services.” (Sept. 6)

The strike has reportedly cost the government 1 billion rand per day, in the largest public sector labor action since 2007. The ANC government has offered the unions a 7.5 percent increase and a 800 rand per month housing allowance.

South Africa has been under the control of the ANC since 1994, when the first nonracial democratic elections were held inside the country since the formation of the racist settler colonial system in 1652. Although the ANC controls the government, the economy is still dominated by transnational mining and manufacturing interests.

At present the unemployment rate is estimated to be 25 percent. A decline in real wages is making it extremely difficult for workers and the poor to purchase food and other essential services.

In a recent speech, Blade Nzimande, the ANC’s minister of higher education and secretary general of the South African Communist Party, addressed the high rate of unemployment, especially

among the youth.

“To have three to seven million 18- to 24-year-olds sitting at home doing nothing is a ticking time bomb. The situation right now is worse than 15 June 1976, the eve of the Soweto riots,” Nzimande said. (Mail & Guardian, Sept. 3)

The public sector strike in South Africa is indicative of the broader struggles being waged by labor throughout the country. The National Union of Mineworkers went out on strike on Sept. 6 at Northam Platinum, demanding a 15 percent pay increase. NUM represents 8,000 workers out of the 8,600 member work force.

In August, the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organization and the National Union of Metalworkers accepted a 10 percent pay raise after an eight-day work stoppage.

### Growing relations with China

With the possible resolution of the public sector strike, the South African government can commit additional resources to addressing the economic crisis that has affected countries throughout the African continent and the world. More details have emerged in regard to the outcome of President Jacob Zuma’s visit to the People’s Republic of China in late August.

The online magazine Leadership states,

“President Zuma’s three-day official visit to China with 13 members of his government and some 370 business and other civil leaders has seen the announcement of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries and the signing of no less than 12 agreements between companies from both sides, ranging from memorandums of understanding to possibly develop power grids, the setting up of a cement plant in South Africa, and on mining and transport infrastructure.” (leadershiponline.co.za, Aug. 30)

The website notes that the visit “has taken South Africa one important step closer to adding the status of being the Africa representative on the informal Bric grouping of developing nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China) to that role with the G-8 and G-20 summits.”

Economic relations between China and South Africa have accelerated in recent years. In 2009 China became South Africa’s largest individual trading partner, replacing the United States and second only to the European Union.

As the impact of the capitalist economic crisis worsens, various states on the African continent and other underdeveloped regions will seek alternative relations with China and other Asian, African and Latin American states. □

# Mozambique unrest over food prices illustrates growing world crisis

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Seven people were killed and 280 suffered injuries in the Southern African nation of Mozambique in early September, when crowds rebelled after a 30 percent increase in food prices. The unrest in Mozambique has prompted concerns that other African states as well as countries internationally will face similar problems related to escalating food prices.

The disturbances in Mozambique were reminiscent of events during 2007 and 2008, when numerous countries in Africa and Europe saw widespread protests over food pricing and deficits. In Mozambique, which has enjoyed relative stability and economic growth over the last several years, the escalation in the price of both food and fuel has made it extremely difficult for workers and the poor to feed their families.

Events in Mozambique have also shed light on concerns about problems associated with food deficits in other African states, such as Egypt and South Africa. In South Africa, where workers held a 20-day public sector strike and other job actions, one of the major causes has been complaints over rises in food prices.

Sizwe Pamla of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union in South Africa pointed to Mozambique

as a stark reminder of the potential social unrest related to rising food prices. “Look at Mozambique,” Pamla said, “we are sitting on a potential time bomb.” (Financial Times, Sept. 3)

Pamla pointed out that “too many workers are living from hand to mouth; the costs for poor people are skyrocketing.” These problems have also been recognized across North Africa, where newspapers carry regular reports of rising anger related to escalating food prices.

According to political analyst Adriano Nuvunga in Mozambique, “Bread is the key item in the basket for ordinary people. People are worried that rising costs have reached the point of no return.” (Financial Times, Sept. 3)

The Sept. 3 London-based Financial Times noted, “The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization’s food index last month reached a two-year high on the back of rising cereal, sugar and meat prices, up almost 16 percent since last year.”

Costs for both water and electricity have also risen by 10 percent in Mozambique. Fuel prices have been increased three times since July in several African states.

### World capitalist crisis at root of instability

Since 2007 the world capitalist system has undergone its worse crisis since the

Great Depression of the 1930s. In the United States approximately 8.4 million workers have lost their jobs.

Capitalist governments and central banks in the West have bailed out the financial institutions and multinational corporations to the tune of trillions of dollars. Real wages for workers have declined and millions have lost their homes, pensions and health care coverage.

This crisis has impacted the developing regions of the world, since these mainly post-colonial states have been completely integrated into the world capitalist system. With the decline of socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the West has been encouraging the developing states to accept wholeheartedly the capitalist model of economic production.

In Africa, it has been estimated that some 50 million people have been thrown into poverty since 2007. Washington has not directly addressed this crisis in the developing states and has instead escalated its military operations in Africa as well as other parts of the so-called Third World in Central Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

Mozambique itself was enslaved and colonized by Portugal for nearly five centuries. The African masses organized themselves during the 1960s and 1970s through the Mozambique Libera-

tion Front (FRELIMO), which waged a successful armed struggle against the Portuguese colonialists who were a part of NATO. This anti-colonial struggle sparked a rebellion among Portuguese soldiers and captains, who overthrew the fascist regime in Lisbon in April 1974.

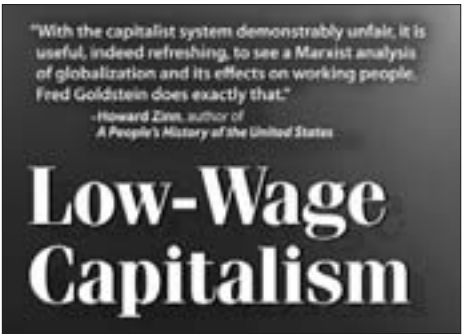
Mozambique won its independence in 1975 and set out to build a socialist society in close alliance with other states in southern Africa. The country served as a rear base for the armed struggles against European settler-colonialism in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and apartheid South Africa.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the racist apartheid regime trained and financed a counterrevolutionary bandit force known as RENAMO (Mozambique Resistance Movement). For a decade RENAMO destroyed development projects, government offices and terrorized the Mozambican population.

In 1992, a cease-fire was signed with RENAMO. A process of national reconciliation led to multiparty elections that still resulted in the continued rule of FRELIMO, the liberation movement that won independence from Portugal.

Nonetheless, the adoption of neoliberal economic policies in the aftermath of the collapse of the European workers states — the USSR and Eastern Europe — created new problems for the Mozambican state. Despite a growth rate of 7.2 percent during the first half of 2010, the country is faced with rising prices and growing social unrest.

Capitalist economic policies have proven to be disastrous for the newly-emerging African states. Only the return to socialist-oriented policies and the unification with other African states in the region can provide the potential for genuine growth in Mozambique and throughout the continent. □



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**Clarence Thomas,**  
ILWU Local 10 and Co-chair,  
Million Worker March Movement



WW STATEMENT:

# On 9/11: Defend the Islamic Center

*Continued from page 1*  
tions, and denial of health care.

Alabama Gov. George Wallace’s 1968 and 1972 national campaigns resembled this aspect of the Tea Party’s program. Wallace targeted African Americans, who were then in an epic struggle to win their civil rights. The Tea Party and its even more rightist allies also have exposed their anti-Black racism by physically confronting members of the Congressional Black Caucus and spewing out barely veiled racist attacks on President Barack Obama.

The Tea Party and its cronies openly campaign against immigrants in a similar attempt to misdirect the anger of U.S.-born workers over harsh conditions caused by the capitalist system’s failure to provide jobs.

Does the Tea Party speak for workers? Among its main funders are two reactionary multi-billionaires, Charles and David Koch. The two have given hundreds of millions of dollars to right-wing causes, including the Tea Party, as detailed by Jane Mayer’s article in the Aug. 30 New Yorker magazine. Sometimes the brothers contribute to win relief from government oversight of their oil industry’s pollution. Sometimes they avoid or prevent taxes. Sometime they promote their ideological battle against all government social services, which includes funding media racists and bigots.

In addition, the corporate media gives enormous publicity to the Tea Party, much of it favorable and almost all of it omitting the dangers raised by this poisonous grouping.

Last, but equally important, the George W. Bush administration exploited propaganda dehumanizing Muslims in order to promote the imperialist invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. The same kind of vicious propaganda aids Washington’s continued threats against Iran and Somalia as well as its support for

the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Anti-Muslim propaganda is essential to the U.S. imperialist war drive.

Faced with this challenge, working-class political organizations and unions must give priority to the effort to confront the Tea Party reactionaries and their racist allies.

First of all, we must work tirelessly among workers of all backgrounds to build solidarity with the Muslim community.

Second, we must expose the reactionary and near-fascist character of many of the forces in and around the Tea Party, as well as the phony character of their claim to represent U.S. workers.

Third, we must explain just why some of the richest people put their money behind these groups that pretend to be “populist.” Using similar lies to those of the fascist and Nazi parties in 1920s and 1930s Italy and Germany, this phony “populist” grouping does the dirty work for the super-rich. What gives the current campaign its dangerous potential is that it takes place during a prolonged capitalist economic crisis that shows no signs of abating.

Fourth, we must never forget that working-class solidarity is international. We must fight against the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq even as we fight for workers’ rights at home.

Working-class organizations must build unity, now more than ever, to fight for jobs, better pay and social benefits, to combat racism and war. The first step in doing that this September is to confront the Tea Party’s anti-Muslim campaign.

Any manifestation of solidarity with the Muslim center helps. Most important is the demonstration on Sept. 11 to confront the racists, called by the Emergency Mobilization against Racism and Anti-Muslim Bigotry. It will gather at 1 p.m. east of City Hall in New York. (For more information see iacenter.org.) □

## Lucius Walker, *ipresente!*

The Rev. Lucius Walker Jr, executive director of the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organization and its founding director from 1967 to 1973, passed away on Sept 7.

The Rev. Walker was a tireless fighter for social justice in this country and a supporter of progressive and revolutionary causes around the world, receiving both the Sandino Award from Nicaragua and the Order of Friendship Award from revolutionary Cuba. He had turned 80 on Aug. 3.

A more in-depth and appreciative commemoration will be written for an upcoming issue of Workers World.

— Larry Hales

## More fracking woes

# Water all around ... Or is there?

*Continued from page 2*  
in more than 70 countries. The impact of fracking on global fresh water resources has yet to be measured, but with scarce water resources in many parts of the globe, it is raising concerns.

A regulatory Global Gas Shale Initiative Conference was held in Washington in August involving representatives from 20 countries and 10 federal entities, as well as state and local regulators. The conference included representatives from the Groundwater Protection Council, an association of state regulators.

The conference addressed the future impact of gas drilling that could account for 30 percent of future gas supplies in the

U.S., Canada and China, and a dramatic portion of future global gas supplies. Fresh water resources are already scarce in many parts of the world and have led to struggles against attempts to privatize water in Latin America and Asia.

David Goldwyn, the State Department’s coordinator for international energy affairs, at a State Department briefing on the conference, opined, “We have, in our country, an umbrella of laws and regulations that makes sure this is done safely and efficiently.” He confidently asserted, “We have safe drinking acts,” completely ignoring the fact that the Clean Water Act of 2006 specifically excludes oversight of hydraulic fracturing — the “Halliburton Clause.” □

*Letter to the editor:*

# Say no to racism and anti-Muslim bigotry

*The following letter was written by a leader of the Band of Brothers, a group of workers at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, N.Y., who are fighting racism on the job. Read more about their struggle at workers.org.*

The Tea Party is the political version of the Ku Klux Klan; they have used the many issues of politics to justify their existence. They have used the Republican Party as a political vehicle to promote their agenda of hate and racism, endorsing many Republicans whose interests are of no value to the working class and the many who are in need of jobs.

The Tea Party is a cunning, conservative group of people strategically trying to put all of their chess pieces in place, so when the time comes they will be able to mount a major offensive attack on all Muslims, immigrants, unions, workers, etc. — the list can go on and on, unless we as a people in struggle unite on all fronts to counter the Tea Party, because if we don’t they will succeed.

Who truly represents the people? Who represents the poor; the just getting by; the ones with jobs and can’t afford a place to live; the oppressed; the disenfranchised; and so on? Who? The Democratic Party? The Democratic Party doesn’t have the backbone to stand up and speak out against the Tea Party — in fact, the Democrats are too reluctant to rock the boat for fear of criticism from the mainstream media. Both the Republican and Democratic parties succumb to corporate interests all the time; these parties don’t represent the interests of the people. They’re too busy taking from the people — now it’s all about Wall Street and bailing out the corporate banks, but whatever happened to bailing out the people?

“A change is gonna come,” because it is in the midst already with the rebirth of the Freedom Party. The Freedom Party has made history by garnering 43,500 petition signatures, one of the highest totals in New York State. That’s almost three times the required 15,000 needed to put candidates on the ballot.

The three candidates for the Freedom Party are individuals of humble origins, outspoken and unafraid, and educated to help educate others. They have remained to defend and stand up with the people: Councilperson Charles Barron for governor; Ms. Eva M. Doyle for lieutenant governor; and Mr. Ramon J. Jimenez, the “Peoples Lawyer,” for attorney general. They are us, we are them, and the statement is loud and clear as the people echo the words of our great sister Fannie Lou Hamer: “We are sick and tired of being sick and tired!”

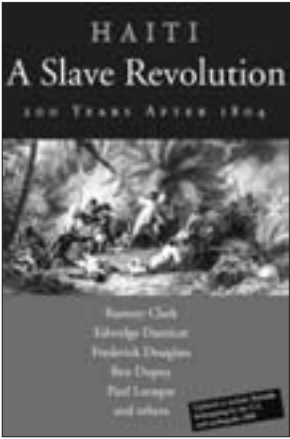
We as a people should have the right to a job, for we are the fuel that keeps the engine of America running. We should have the right to a home and not be homeless; we should have the right to an education instead of being put into debt by trying to obtain it. We should have the right to decent health care because we have a right to live. We are not “illegal aliens” because no human being is illegal and, as a matter of fact, this country was built from the labor of many walks of life. These are fundamental things that we should have, but in a capitalist society it’s all about greed and exploitation.

Our time has come. We have the ingredients to propel ourselves to the moral standards we’ve so long hoped for, where everyone — regardless of ethnic origin/culture, religion, color, sexual orientation/preferences. etc. — is respected and treated equal. We have an opportunity to make history that will forever be etched in time and echoed in classrooms all over the world.

If we fully unite and consolidate with unions, laborers, organizations and activists in the struggle and the community, then and only then can we achieve such a feat. We must do so by making our voices heard on Saturday, Sept. 11, and going to the polls on Tuesday, Nov. 2; together we can create a rippling effect that will grow stronger.

In the words of our brother Anthony Gronowicz of the Bronx Green Party, “If the 1960s were a wave, what’s coming is a tsunami.” ¡Sí se puede! Straight ahead! Freedom Party!

— Band of Brothers anti-racist leader

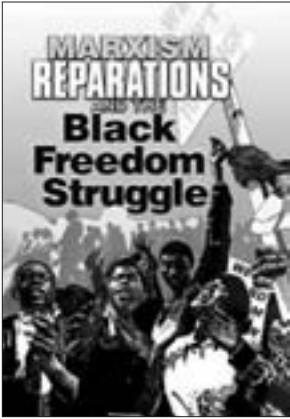


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**Racism and Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales

**Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin



# WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE CALLS FOR Revolutionary struggle, socialist unity

By Bob McCubbin  
Los Angeles

Known in the region as “the people’s library,” the Southern California Library of Los Angeles was the site of the first Western Regional “Abolish Capitalism, Fight Injustice—Conference on Socialism” of Workers World Party.

With daylong attendance on Sept. 4 well surpassing 100, and standing-room-only available for latecomers, the assemblage was notable for its diversity, especially the presence of large numbers of people of color, youth, activists and workers of many nationalities.

Along with many people from southern California, especially the Los Angeles area, party representatives attended from the WWP chapters in San Francisco, San Diego and Tucson, Ariz. Party members and supporters also came from San Jose, Oakland and Orange County in California as well as from Seattle.

An open mike for questions and comments followed every plenary session.

Also notable was the participation in the conference of speakers representing other organizations of struggle that agree with WWP’s recent call to the movement for a regroupment for socialist unity. Kuusela Hilo of BAYAN USA described the current plight and centuries-long struggle of Filipino workers for national liberation; Ron Gochez of Unión del Barrio provided a militant defense of the demand for the return of stolen Mexican lands; and Zahi Damuni, co-founder of Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, focused on liberation for occupied Palestine.

Rosie Martinez, former vice president of Service Employees Local 660 (now Local 721), who is currently a leader of the union’s Latino Caucus, spoke of the struggle to defend some of the most oppressed workers, especially women workers in the health industries. She linked that struggle to the effort of workers worldwide to defend themselves against attacks by some of the same transnational corporations.

Celina Benitez from the Southern California Immigration Coalition called for a day-in, day-out, full-time commitment to the struggle for full legalization of all immigrant workers, in addition to focusing on important mobilization days such as May 1.

Dave Welsh, a San Francisco Labor Council delegate representing the Letter Carriers union, spoke on the need for a Works Progress Administration-type federal jobs program for the 30 million presently unemployed and underemployed people in this country. He urged that this demand be raised from the rank-and-file at the projected Oct. 2 Washington, D.C., mobilization.

Carlos Mejia from the Honduran resistance gave a solidarity greeting.

## Capitalist economic crisis, war at home

John Parker, a WWP National Committee member and Los Angeles branch organizer, opened the conference with a tribute to the important work of all the organizations present and a call for increased solidarity despite any political differences. Such an effort is necessary, he suggested, as groundwork to the building of unity in the struggle for socialism.

Parker went on to offer a brief analysis of how the historical pattern in which workers in the imperialist countries have been more privileged than workers in the

superexploited countries is changing. There is a global “leveling” underway. Going under the name of “globalization,” the result is the growing impoverishment of workers everywhere.

Parker raised the current condition of overproduction, the burgeoning warehouses full of commodities for which there are no buyers. Under these chronic conditions, the imperialists don’t want educated workers. There is a serious effort underway to destroy the public education system. But a positive condition is the changing character of the working class. It has become more multinational with a larger percentage of women. These demographic developments bring with them the certainty of more dynamic and class-conscious working-class leadership.

Parker quoted from the book “High Tech, Low Pay” by Sam Marcy, founding member of Workers World Party, on the changes in production that underlie these developments: “The technological revolution is therefore a quantum jump whose devastating effects require a revolutionary strategy to overcome.”

WWP national leader Larry Holmes stated that even capitalism functioning normally is a crisis for the working class. He described the present global and national situation, however, as a capitalist crisis, but one of a new type, where the various component parts of the capitalist system have ceased working in harmony and are now, in fact, in conflict with each other. The ruling class is now and will increasingly use racism as a solution to the deepening problem of an economy stuck in neutral.

Holmes stressed the need to actively fight the ruling-class program of racism and defend immigrant workers and Muslims and all who are under attack. He cited as an example the Party’s role in initiating a Sept. 11 mobilization to defend the proposed Islamic center in lower Manhattan.

While on the one hand describing the Tea Party movement as a phenomenon that must be taken seriously, he emphasized that it is not “the real storm.” It is, he suggested, the storm before the real storm. The real storm, he predicted, is coming: “The real storm is the working class rising up.”

Holmes noted the historic tradition of working-class struggle and emphasized that revolutionaries must take seriously and be involved in every struggle of workers and oppressed people, no matter how minor, while always keeping in mind the big picture, the need to build a mass movement for socialism. Socialism, he emphasized, is the only reasonable path for the planet. He concluded his remarks with the observation that the fight for socialism is not the property of one party. It must be a movement, and we have to launch such a socialist movement.

Judy Greenspan, a longtime party activist from San Francisco and a teacher,



Cheryl LaBash



Maggie Vascassenno



Judy Greenspan



Gloria Verdieu



Larry Holmes



Rosie Martinez



Sharon Black



Larry Hales



Abayomi Azikiwe



Kuusela Hilo



Paul Teitelbaum

WW PHOTOS: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE, CHERYL LABASH, BOB MCCUBBIN, MONICA MOOREHEAD

offered an overview of the growing attacks on public education, stressing the scapegoating of teachers, the use of divide-and-conquer tactics that pit parents against teachers and teachers against teachers, and the racist character of the present system. She urged everyone to support the Oct. 7 Defend Public Education mobilization.

## Capitalist state terrorizing our communities

Jefferson Azevedo, a Brazilian revolutionary and Los Angeles WWP branch member, reminded the audience that wars are also a cause of migration. The military, he charged, is an important purveyor of racism.

Larry Hales, a leader of the revolutionary youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together and WW contributing editor, spoke on the role of the state, a Marxist concept defined as organized violence, such as the police and the military, that stands between the haves and the have-nots and functions as protection for the haves and a constant threat of terror against the workers and oppressed.

Gloria Verdieu, a San Diego WWP branch organizer, spoke on the cases of political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, the MOVE 9 and Jamil Abdulh Al-Amin. Cheryl LaBash, a WWP national organizer and a co-coordinator of the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange, paid tribute to the Cuban socialist revolution and called for the freedom of the Cuban Five political prisoners.

## Fighting U.S. imperialism, defending self-determination

Monica Moorehead, a WW managing editor and Women’s Fightback Network organizer, spoke on the Party’s theoretical contributions in explaining the class roots of women’s oppression and lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression. She also spoke on a recent conference she attended in Montreal that brought together more than 350 women activists from around the world under the banner of fighting imperialism.

Teresa Gutierrez, co-coordinator of the New York May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights and a WWP national leader, stated that there will be no compromising on full rights for all immigrant workers. “No to the Schumer plan,” she emphasized, and no to “comprehensive immigration reform,” a code phrase for continuing the persecution of immigrant workers. She cited V.I. Lenin’s writings on the right of oppressed nations to self-determination as an essential guide



Zahi Damuni



Ron Gochez & Carlos Mejia

in formulating demands such as the return of the lands stolen from Mexico and the right of African Americans to reparations for centuries of unpaid slave labor. Within the movement of immigrant workers, she observed, there exists an army while, in fact, a world without borders is being created by the international working class.

Paul Teitelbaum, a WWP organizer in Tucson and a May 1 Coalition activist, recounted the sordid history of the U.S. takeover of Mexican lands and the disastrous effects the “free-trade” agreement NAFTA has had on Mexico’s poor and working-class people.

Sharon Black, a national WWP organizer, spoke on how individualism is promoted by bourgeois culture, and how it serves the interests of the ruling class. But our class needs organization, she insisted, especially since the ruling class keeps us exploited and oppressed in part because it is very organized and centralized. Black urged conference attendees not affiliated to seriously consider joining WWP or one of the other organizations in attendance.

Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Pan-African News Wire and an organizer of the Detroit branch of WWP, traced the history of North American/African relations from the beginning of the trade in enslaved African people to the current efforts by the Pentagon to achieve decisive military control over the African continent.

Los Angeles WWP organizer Maggie Vascassenno, California student activist Daniella Rodriguez and San Diego WWP member Zola Muhammad were conference co-chairs. The event concluded with a spirited singing of “The International,” a revolutionary workers’ anthem.

When asked how she liked the conference, Fresno State college student Chisanga Changa from Zambia told WW, “I am liberated, educated and inspired. The conference was amazing. I was very touched.”

The success of this conference showed that as the economic crisis deepens, here and worldwide, socialism is becoming more popular and capitalism more and more unpopular.

The Los Angeles WWP branch will be holding Marxist classes on socialism starting on Sept. 18. For more information, call (323) 515-5870 or visit workers-world.net. □



Monica Moorehead



Dave Welsh



## Activistas pro derechos de los/as inmigrantes responden mientras agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza invaden Arizona

Por Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Arizona

Mucha gente respiró con alivio cuando un juez federal prohibió porciones de la ley SB 1070 antiinmigrante de Arizona en respuesta a una demanda presentada por el gobierno federal. Sin embargo, con o sin orden judicial, la situación real en el sur de Arizona ha empeorado. Los arrestos y detenciones han aumentado, y se notan más agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza recorriendo las calles de ciudades como Tucson, que está a más de 60 millas al norte de la frontera con México.

La infusión de cientos de millones de dólares en proyectos del Departamento de Seguridad de la Patria (Department of Homeland Security, DHS, por las siglas en inglés) para la denominada “seguridad fronteriza” no sólo ha permitido que la agencia inmigratoria, ICE, con-

tinúe sus ataques terroristas, sino que también ha permitido que la Patrulla Fronteriza, (PF), incrementemente el número de sus agentes y los mueva más y más al norte, lejos de la frontera y dentro de las ciudades.

Aunque abiertamente no hacen cumplir con las leyes locales, ni paran por infracciones de tráfico o cuestionan personas en la calle, hay suficientes agentes de la PF disponibles para responder en 10 a 20 minutos a un llamado de la policía local. Y a pesar de que no hay un acuerdo de “comunidades seguras” o 287(g) en vigor entre el DHS y las ciudades de Tucson y Tucson del sur, la policía en estas dos ciudades sistemáticamente ha estado llamando a los agentes de la PF a la escena de paradas por infracción de tráfico. Una luz trasera que no funcione o una ventana teñida demasiado oscura a menudo se convierte en la pesadilla de detención y deportación.

Jason Aragón, un cineasta de producciones PanLeft, también es miembro del proyecto Patrulla de la Migra/Cop Watch de Tucson. Él provee entrenamiento sobre la forma de grabar vídeo y documentar las acciones de la policía y los agentes de la PF y dice que en las últimas semanas ha habido un aumento significativo de llamadas telefónicas de personas que han sido detenidas por la policía de la ciudad y dicen cómo los agentes de la PF aparecen poco después.

Patrulla de la Migra, explicó, envía entre 20 y 30 personas en las noches de fines de semana para responder a este tipo de llamadas de auxilio. Un equipo de Patrulla de la Migra llega a la escena, la graban en vídeo y documentan lo que ven, y luego suben el video a YouTube para que el público la vea.

Muchas personas de la comunidad se están uniendo a la Patrulla de la Migra para ayudar. En una alianza con el grupo

local de derechos de los/as inmigrantes, Derechos Humanos, se ha lanzado la campaña Yo Soy Testigo. Yo Soy Testigo tiene un número de teléfono disponible las 24 horas y los siete días: (520) 261-5890 y tiene voluntarios/as listos/as para responder. Aragón dijo, “Esto es como el 911 para personas detenidas por la policía y la Patrulla Fronteriza. ¿A quién más pueden llamar”? Esto es también el primer paso de la unión de personas para actuar en su propia defensa.

El 13 de agosto el Congreso asignó \$600 millones y el presidente Barack Obama firmó una ley de presupuesto complementario de emergencia, la HR 6080, para la “seguridad fronteriza”. Este dinero, que debería usarse para mantener abiertas nuestras escuelas y hospitales, será en cambio utilizado para infestar nuestras calles con más agentes de la PF que van a aterrorizar a los/as trabajadores/as y a destrozr familias. □

## Entrevista con líder sindical Huelga de maestros/as en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Decenas de miles de maestros/as en Puerto Rico llevaron a cabo un día de paro laboral el 26 de agosto para protestar la ofensiva del gobernador neoliberal Luis Fortuño, que ha dejado al sistema educativo de la isla en ruinas. Esta huelga histórica cerró el 90 por ciento de las escuelas de la isla y mostró al gobierno una gran resistencia por parte de los/as maestros/as, tal como lo hizo la exitosa huelga de los/as estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico recientemente.

En su guerra feroz contra la clase trabajadora, el aparato capitalista de Estados Unidos se dirige no sólo a la clase trabajadora de hoy, sino también a las generaciones venideras al destruir el sistema de educación pública. Esto es más dolorosamente cierto en el territorio dominado por Estados Unidos, Puerto Rico, donde la devastación de lo que debería ser el terreno nutriente para un futuro prometedor está alcanzando proporciones criminales.

Décadas de abandono por parte de pasadas administraciones, profundizada por el actual gobernador pro-yanqui, han dejado los edificios de las escuelas en descuido, libros y demás materiales escasos, profesores/as despedidos/as y mal

pagados/as, mientras aumenta su carga de trabajo, y los programas de educación física, arte, y educación especial cancelados supuestamente para resolver la crisis financiera. Todo esto se hace para el beneficio de contratistas privados o corporaciones, quienes después “salvarían” todo el sistema luego de que se derrumbe.

Pero los/as estudiantes y ahora los/as maestros/as están en resistencia. Bajo la consigna “1.500 escuelas, un magisterio”, los/as miembros de la Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (FMPR), la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR), Educamos y la Unión Nacional de Educadores y Trabajadores de la Educación (UNETE) unieron filas y efectivamente paralizaron las clases en toda la isla.

Se estimó que 30.000 profesores/as, de un total de 40.000 participaron activamente. La FMPR inició el llamado, que fue rápidamente respaldado por la AMPR, Educamos y UNETE. Estas tres últimas organizaciones celebraron una conferencia de prensa conjunta el 22 de agosto y anunciaron su apoyo a la huelga de un día.

### Entrevista con líder sindical

Workers World/Mundo Obrero habló con Eva Ayala, presidenta de Educamos, el 30 de agosto. Ayala es maestra de kindergarten en la ciudad de Comerío.

WW/MO le preguntó, ¿Cuáles eran las exigencias más importantes, el impacto de la huelga y cuál era el siguiente paso en la lucha?

Ayala dijo que exigen que el gobierno “nombre los recursos humanos para nuestros estudiantes inmediatamente y que se trabaje con los maestros que declararon excedentes porque estos maestros son en realidad permanentes. Muchos de ellos al día de hoy todavía los están moviendo de escuelas, violentando sus derechos de antigüedad.

“Otra de las demandas principales es que se activen los Comités de Organización Escolar, porque en éstos es donde se le da una participación activa a los padres, maestros y estudiantes en el proceso de nombramiento de maestros y en el proceso de determinar cuáles son los recursos que necesita cada una de las escuelas en Puerto Rico. Por la normativa que tiene el actual Departamento de Educación estos comités no están activos.

“En tercer lugar, estamos planteando que se revise la normativa con respecto a los maestros de salud, educación física, bellas artes y educación especial, para que esos recursos que han sido eliminados en la mayoría de las escuelas porque el Departamento de Educación dice que no son necesarios, se activen nuevamente porque nosotros entendemos que eso va a ampliar el ofrecimiento para nuestros estudiantes.

“Otra demanda importante es que se eliminen los períodos (de clase) de 60 minutos para que regresen los períodos de 50 minutos porque de lo contrario no se le pueden ampliar los ofrecimientos a los estudiantes y se quedarían en las destrezas básicas de ciencias, matemáticas, español, estudios sociales e inglés,

porque no contarían con el tiempo suficiente para tomar otras materias como bellas artes, educación física, etc.”, dijo Ayala.

“Una demanda importante es también la eliminación de la supervisión de nuestras escuelas por parte de gente externa al departamento de educación porque sabemos que el gobierno tiene un interés de contratar compañías privadas para que se encarguen de dirigir nuestras escuelas, alegando que a lo mejor no han cumplido con las expectativas del pueblo puertorriqueño. Estamos en contra de la privatización, porque estas compañías se han llevado de forma sustancial el presupuesto de las escuelas y no se ha evidenciado ningún mejoramiento en el aprovechamiento académico de nuestros estudiantes.

“Debido a estas políticas, el programa de educación especial está en compás de espera y nuestros estudiantes no están recibiendo los servicios de salud que necesitan”.

En cuanto al impacto de la huelga, Ayala dijo: “Le dimos una lección al gobierno de que estamos dispuestos a lanzarnos en el momento en que sea necesario ya que Fortuño y el secretario de educación pensaron que éramos incapaces de lanzarnos a las calles. Porque tradicionalmente se iban 2.000 maestros o 1.000 maestros a la calle, dependiendo del sector magisterial que hiciera el llamado, pero contrario a otras ocasiones, en esta ocasión todos los sectores magisteriales participaron y la respuesta fue contundente”.

Ayala agregó que el paso siguiente a seguir es continuar organizando en todos los lugares y a todos los niveles “desarrollando un proceso más amplio con comités de padres, estudiantes y maestros, y se den cuenta de que esto no es sólo una acción de un día”. □

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